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SCHOOL SAFETY DURING COVID-19



COVID-19 BOOSTERS

COVID-19 booster doses help keep immunity strong and increase protection against COVID-19. Pre-teens and teens between the ages of 12 and 17 can receive a Pfizer booster. The following timeline is recommended for COVID-19 vaccines:

Ages 12 - 17

- A Booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine is available to people who received their second dose of Pfizer at least 5 months ago.

Age 18+

- May receive a Booster dose of their choice if the minimum time has passed since completing their primary vaccine series:
 - **Pfizer or Moderna** -Received second dose at least 5 months ago
 - **Johnson & Johnson** -Received single dose at least 2 months ago

All COVID-19 vaccines continue to provide significant protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. However, certain populations are seeing a slight decrease in vaccine effectiveness against infection. Booster doses of vaccines are very common. They are part of most childhood and adult vaccine series to ensure a person maintains optimal immunity against infection from a disease. See this [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Chart](#) for additional details. For more information on Boosters, visit: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccine-Boosters.aspx>

FREE AT-HOME COVID-19 TESTS KITS

Beginning mid-January, every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free at-home COVID-19 tests, through the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Postal Service. The tests are free and expected to ship in 7-12 days. The tests available for order are rapid antigen at-home tests and can be taken anywhere. The results are available in 30 minutes and no lab drop-off is required. These tests will work whether or not you have COVID-19 symptoms and will work whether or not you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines. Californians are encouraged to order tests now so they have them when they need them. Orders will ship free starting in late January. Visit [The Postal Service \(USPS\) Website](#) to order.

QUESTIONS?

- The Sacramento County COVID Hotline can be reached at (916) 875-2400. It is staffed Monday-Friday between 8am and 5pm. If a volunteer is not available, please leave a message and someone will return your call as soon as possible.
- If you would prefer to email, send general COVID-19 questions to COVID19@saccounty.net.
- If you have COVID-19 vaccine related questions, email COVID19vaccine@saccounty.net.

MASKS FOR KIDS: TIPS & RESOURCES

Masks are one of the mitigation measure to help reduce COVID-19 in schools. Masks help stop the virus from getting into the air if the person wearing it is infected. Similarly, they also help protect people from breathing in the virus from the air.

An effective mask has both **good fit** and **filtration**. A well-fitting mask is snug to the face, covers the nose, and has no gaps around the edges. Elastic head straps generally provide better fit than ear loops. All in all, the highest quality mask that will be comfortably worn is better than no mask at all.

KF94, KN95 and N95s

KF94s and KN95s are both available in kid's sizes with good fit and good filtration. Ear loops should be sized for a snug fit. It is recommended to cautiously check reviews before purchasing online, as many counterfeit KN95s are on the market. N95s also provide excellent fit and filtration but are not made in kid's sizes. N95s in size "small" may fit older children. KF94, KN95 and N95 masks may be safely reused if the ear loops and nose clip continue to provide a snug fit. The masks should be discarded when they become damaged or dirty.

Medical Masks (Including Surgical and Disposable Face Masks)

Kid-sized medical masks provide good filtration, but do not provide a tight fit. The fit of a medical mask can be improved with a simple [modification](#), by tying a knot on the ear loops to create a snug fit, or using a [mask brace](#). To find a high-quality medical mask, search for "ASTM medical masks for kids."

Cloth Masks

Fabric masks can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, but many have both poor fit and filtration. Effective kid-sized fabric masks have:

- Two layers of tightly woven fabric with a third layer of non-woven fabric (such as polypropylene)
- A nose wire to reduce gaps around the nose
- Adjustable ear loops

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Masks-for-Kids-Tips-and-Resources.aspx>

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF COVID-19 TESTS?

PCR Test

- Most sensitive test currently available.
- Analyzed in a laboratory.
- Results in typically in 24-72 hours so take precautions as if you are positive until you receive your results

Rapid Antigen Tests

- Helpful to get faster results when feeling sick or as a precaution before gatherings.
- Less sensitive than PCR tests. If you test within the first couple days of infection when you may have a lower amount of virus in your body, the test may not detect the virus. This is called a "false negative". Your test may say you are negative when you may be positive. If you continue to have symptoms, it is best to re-test.
- Results in as little as 15 minutes.
- Can be done at home with an at-home testing kit

If you have symptoms are that are worsening—especially if you are older or have underlying medical conditions and are at risk for severe COVID-19—you should consult with your health provider regardless of test results.



SACRAMENTO COUNTY FREE TESTING LOCATIONS CAN BE FOUND AT:

<https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/Symptom-Screening-MobileTestingSite.aspx>





COVID-19 HAS FURTHER EXPOSED YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

In early December, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a new Surgeon General's Advisory regarding the vital need to address the nation's youth mental health crisis that has been further exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. With many mitigation measures in place to protect the health and safety of children and teens from COVID-19, including vaccination, the advisory outlines the pandemic's catastrophic impacts of mental health challenges that have been brought on by the pandemic, but also the challenges that existed prior to the global dominance of the virus.

In turn, the advisory provides recommendation for a synchronized response from families, community organizations, government, technology companies and others to improve the mental health of youth. Mental health challenges are real and prevalent among children, teens, and transitional age youth. The pandemic has altered youth's experiences at home, school and in the community. The wellbeing of our country in the future is dependent on how we support and invest in the later generation.

As many continue to work hard to protect youth and adults against COVID-19, the same focus needs to be put into everyone emerging stronger on the other side. The advisory exemplifies how everyone can work together to provide the support for children in the dual crisis.

One in five children in the United States lives with a mental health challenge. From 2009 to 2019, the amount of high school aged students who reported ongoing feelings of sadness or hopelessness increased by 40% to more than a third of students. Suicidal behavior in this same population also increased in this same period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included 19% seriously contemplating suicide, a 36% increase, and approximately 16% creating a suicide plan in the previous year, a 44% increase from the decade indicated above. Between 2007 and 2018, suicide rates among youth and adults ages 10-24 in the United States increased

by 57%. Early data from 2020 estimates close to 7,000 deaths by suicide among that age group

As mentioned, the advisory outlines a series of recommendations to improve youth and transitional age youth mental health.

"Recommendations include:

- Recognize that mental health is an essential part of overall health.
- Empower youth and their families to recognize, manage, and learn from difficult emotions.
- Ensure that every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care.
- Support the mental health of children and youth in educational, community, and childcare settings. And expand and support the early childhood and education workforce.
- Address the economic and social barriers that contribute to poor mental health for young people, families, and caregivers.
- Increase timely data collection and research to identify and respond to youth mental health needs more rapidly. This includes more research on the relationship between technology and youth mental health, and technology companies should be more transparent with data and algorithmic processes to enable this research."

[Read the full Surgeon General's Advisory on Protecting Youth Mental Health - PDF.](#)

CRISIS SERVICES & SUPPORT

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

We can all help to prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support.

[\(800\) 273-8255](#)

24/7 Youth Support: The Source

24/7 support to Sacramento County youth up to 26 years old and caregivers during times of crisis and struggle. Priority is given to current and former foster youth, or caregivers of a foster youth **[\(916\) 787-7678](#) Call or TEXT**

Visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) the American Academy of Pediatrics website to get more information for families about the COVID-19 vaccine.

ISOLATION & QUARANTINE UPDATES

Persons Who Test Positive for COVID-19:

- **Isolation** for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, previous infection or lack of symptoms.
- Stay home for at least 5 days.
- Isolation can end after day 5 if symptoms are not present or are resolving and a diagnostic specimen* collected on day 5 or later tests negative.
- If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present or are resolving, isolation can end after day 10.
- If fever is present, isolation should be continued until fever resolves.
- If symptoms, other than fever, are not resolving continue to isolate until symptoms are resolving or until after day 10.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings (see Section below on masking for additional information)

**Rapid Antigen test preferred*

Unvaccinated Persons who are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19:

- **Quarantine** if you are Unvaccinated; OR Vaccinated and booster-eligible but have not yet received their booster dose.

(Refer to CDC COVID-19 Booster Shots to determine who is booster eligible)

- Stay home for at least 5 days, after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Test on day 5.
- Quarantine can end after day 5 if symptoms are not present and a diagnostic specimen collected on day 5 or later tests negative.
- If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present, quarantine can end after day 10.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings
- Strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted.

- If testing positive, follow isolation recommendations above.
- If symptoms develop, test and stay home.

Vaccinated Persons Who are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19:

- **No Quarantine** if Boosted; OR Vaccinated, but not yet booster-eligible.
- Test on day 5.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days, especially in indoor settings (see Section below on masking for additional information)
- If testing positive, follow isolation recommendations above.
- If symptoms develop, test and stay home.

This is from our general Isolation & Quarantine guidance and can be found at:

<https://dhs.sacounty.gov/PUB/Pages/Communicable-Disease-Control/COVID-19-Resources-for-Those-in-Isolation-or-Quarantine.aspx>

Schools sites are using the County & State School Guidance which may differ from the information above.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Vaccination is the most important tool to end the COVID-19 pandemic. You should get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you already had COVID-19. Any Californian aged 5 and up can get vaccinated for free.

When can I get my vaccine after having COVID-19? You can get your vaccine after your isolation has ended and symptoms have resolved.

When can I get my booster after having COVID-19? You can get your booster after your isolation has ended and symptoms have resolved AND the recommended time has elapsed since your primary vaccine series of either Pfizer (5 months), Moderna (5 months) or J&J (2 months).



COVID-19 VACCINE & BOOSTER APPOINTMENTS can be made at <https://myturn.ca.gov/> If you need help making an appointment, call 211 or (916) 529-4519.